

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**

**Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2020/21**

This is the Transport Policy Statement for young people aged 16 to 18 in education who start their course before their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Department responsible:** SEND Transport Service

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This transport policy statement also relates to those young people aged 19 to 25 years (inclusive) who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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# Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Transport policy statement</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Aims and objectives</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Concessionary travel support</b> .....	<b>2</b>
	16+ Zip Oyster Photocard .....	2
	18+ Student Oyster Photocard .....	3
	Apprentice Oyster Photocard .....	3
	16 to 25 railcard .....	3
	Disabled person's railcard .....	3
<b>5.</b>	<b>Travel support from education and training providers</b> .....	<b>4</b>
	16 to 19 Bursary Fund .....	4
	'Care to Learn' for young parents .....	5
<b>6.</b>	<b>Local authority home to school or college travel support</b> .....	<b>6</b>
	Students without an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years .....	6
	Local authority support for young people without an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years .....	6
	Eligibility criteria .....	6
	Assistance in exceptional circumstances .....	7
	Right to appeal .....	8
	Students with an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years .....	8
	Eligibility criteria for post-16 travel assistance and Year 11 reassessment .....	9
	Nearest suitable placement .....	10
	The SEN bursary scheme .....	10
	Targeted independent travel training for young people with SEND .....	11
	Applying for post-16 travel assistance .....	11
<b>7.</b>	<b>Contributions towards the travel of young people with SEND aged 16 to 19 years</b> .....	<b>12</b>
	Discretionary policy .....	12
	Spare seats on transport – spare seat policy .....	12
	Distance from home to school or college .....	12
	16-19 contribution refunds .....	13
<b>8.</b>	<b>Local authority travel support for students with an EHCP aged 19 to 25 years</b> .....	<b>13</b>
	Students with an EHCP aged 19 to 25 years .....	13
	Eligibility criteria for post-19 travel assistance .....	14
	Applying for post-19 travel assistance .....	15
<b>9.</b>	<b>Apprenticeships</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Short-term difficulties</b> .....	<b>17</b>
	Students receiving bus transport provision .....	17
	Parents with authorised mileage allowances .....	17
	Students who have temporarily changed address .....	17
	Re-housed students .....	17
<b>11.</b>	<b>Dual or link placements and inclusion</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Residential education and training providers</b> .....	<b>18</b>
	Transport for students attending a weekly residential placement .....	18
	Transport for students attending a 38-week residential placement .....	18
	Maximum transport assistance for residential placements and variations .....	18
	Transport for students attending a 52-week residential placement .....	18
	Visits to students attending residential placements .....	18
<b>13.</b>	<b>Appeals</b> .....	<b>19</b>

<b>14.</b>	<b>Education, health and care plans</b> .....	<b>20</b>
	Recording travel assistance in EHCPs .....	20
	Annual reviews and travel assistance.....	20
<b>15.</b>	<b>Transport management</b> .....	<b>20</b>
	Timeframes for arranging travel assistance .....	20
	Confirming travel arrangements.....	20
	Availability of transport .....	21
	Individual travel arrangements .....	21
<b>16.</b>	<b>Passenger assistants</b> .....	<b>21</b>
	Criteria for having a passenger assistant.....	21
	Transport providers – nominated controllers .....	21
	Use of CCTV on transport .....	21
<b>18.</b>	<b>Pick-up and drop-off arrangements</b> .....	<b>22</b>
	Pick-up points .....	22
	Collection points .....	22
	Timing of pick-up and drop-off.....	23
	Responsibility for accompanying the student to and from the vehicle .....	23
	Variations to normal procedure .....	24
	Stopping outside a student’s home .....	24
<b>19.</b>	<b>Reporting absence</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>20.</b>	<b>Parents and carers not at home</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>21.</b>	<b>Parents and carers with other commitments</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>22.</b>	<b>Severe weather</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>23.</b>	<b>Safety assessments</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>24.</b>	<b>Medication</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>25.</b>	<b>Behaviour standards</b> .....	<b>27</b>
	Instances of unacceptable difficulties .....	27
	Allegations of unacceptable behaviour .....	27
	Responsibilities of students.....	28
<b>26.</b>	<b>Providing a quality service</b> .....	<b>28</b>
	Transport standards .....	28
	Continuity .....	29
	Safeguarding.....	29
	Local authority designated officer (LADO) .....	30
<b>27.</b>	<b>Comments, compliments and complaints</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>28.</b>	<b>Equalities statement</b> .....	<b>31</b>

## 1. Introduction

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel support, but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement. This should specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the local authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of students of sixth-form age who are receiving education or training or who are continuing in any learning before their 19th birthday.

## 2. Transport policy statement

The local authority's transport policy statement must state the extent that transport arrangements help disabled people and people with learning difficulties or disabilities to attend education or training.

The policy statement defines students of sixth-form age as young people over the age 16 years, but under 19 years of age, or who are continuing students who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (in National Curriculum Years 12, 13 and 14).

Local authorities must encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties or disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25 years.

This policy statement, for ease of use, separates the support which can be offered to post-16 students into two categories, as the duties on the local authority to provide transport differ in these areas.

- **Post-16** includes students of sixth-form age and those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 19 (in the academic year in which they turn 19 years of age) or students aged over 19 completing programmes of learning that started before they turned 19 years of age.
- **Post-19** includes students aged 19 to 25 (inclusive) starting from the academic year after they turn 19 years of age.

This policy statement specifies the support that the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (Achieving for Children acting on behalf of the local authority) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of post-16 students receiving education or training.

All young people in Year 11 receiving special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) travel assistance must reapply for travel support for their post-16 education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the local authority: for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

### **3. Aims and objectives**

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that ‘providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life’.

This means preparing young people, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives. The objective for the home to school travel service is to support children and young people with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible. This is because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, being able to enjoy time with their families and friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, and studying, training and gaining meaningful employment.

This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.

It is recognised that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs. Where this is the case, the objective of the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people’s transport where this is desired and appropriate.

The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement is focused on a needs-led approach in which the individual requirements of each young person are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support for them. This involved a move away from an approach of blanket and standard provision to young people, in favour of a policy which recognises that young people aged 16 and over are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

### **4. Concessionary travel support**

Students aged 16 to 19 years can access free travel on buses and trams under the Transport for London concessionary travel scheme.

#### **16+ Zip Oyster Photocard**

Children aged 16 to 17 years are eligible for free and discounted travel on Transport for London services with a 16+ Zip Oyster Photocard. This includes 50% off adult fares on buses, London Underground, Docklands Light Railway, London Overground, Transport for London rail services and most National Rail services. Students living in London are eligible for free travel on buses and trams. Students are also eligible for a child-rate seven-day, monthly or longer- period travel card and bus and tram pass.

[Further information](#)

## **18+ Student Oyster Photocard**

An 18+ Student Oyster Photocard entitles the holder to buy a student rate travel card and bus pass at 30% less than the adult rate season ticket. They are valid for seven days, one month or longer periods up to one year. Money can be added to an 18+ Student Oyster Photo card to pay adult-rate Oyster single fares. These are cheaper than paying cash.

Oyster card discounts apply at all times of day.

[Further information](#)

## **Apprentice Oyster Photocard**

If a student is aged 18 years or over, live in a London borough and is the first year of an apprenticeship, he or she is eligible for discounted travel with an Apprentice Oyster Photocard, which gives a 30% discount on adult-rate Travelcards and bus and tram pass season tickets.

[Further information](#)

## **16 to 25 railcard**

Students can purchase a 16 to 25 railcard for a one off cost of £30. This provides a one- third discount on rail fares. If a student has a 16 to 25 Railcard and travels on the train at, or before 10.00am between Monday and Friday (except during July and August) a minimum fare will apply to their journey.

[Further information](#)

## **Disabled person's railcard**

Students may be entitled to apply for a disabled person's railcard, which would provide a one-third discount on train travel anywhere in the country, at any time of day, for themselves and a friend, if they:

- receive Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) at the higher or lower rate for the mobility component, or the higher or middle rate for the care component
- have a visual impairment
- have a hearing impairment
- have epilepsy
- receive Attendance Allowance or Severe Disablement Allowance
- receive War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement
- receive War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability
- buy or lease a vehicle through the Motability Scheme [Further information](#).

## 5. Travel support from education and training providers

### 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

Students may be able to access some funding towards transport costs directly from individual education and training providers from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund. The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Each learning provider has some discretionary funding that can be used for this purpose, subject to their own criteria.

Resources are limited so students should make an application to their school or college directly as early as possible in the academic year. There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries.

- A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
  - young people in care
  - care leavers
  - young people in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
- young people in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs. To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:
  - be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2020
  - be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and have an education, health and care plan (EHCP)
  - be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (known as 19+ continuers)
  - be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body that assures quality (such as Ofsted); the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

Education and training providers are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

[Further information](#) search for post-16 bursaries.



## ‘Care to Learn’ for young parents

If a student is a young parent aged under 20 years, ‘Care to Learn’ funding can help pay for their childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while they are learning. Care to Learn funding can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare taster session (up to five days)
- keeping a childcare place over the summer holidays
- travel costs for taking a child to the childcare provider

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a childminder, pre-school playgroup, day nursery or an out-of-school club. If a child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission’s register for specialist provision.

If students want a relative to get Care to Learn funding for looking after their child, the relative needs to be both providing registered childcare for children they are not related to and living apart from the student and the child.

Childcare payments must go directly to the childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid, the childcare provider needs to confirm the child’s attendance, the student’s school or college needs to confirm that they are attending your course and payments for travel costs must go to the student’s school or college to make the payment to the student or arrange the travel for them.

Care to Learn payments will stop if the student stops attending the course, finishes their course, or the student’s child stops attending the childcare setting.

Students are eligible for Care to Learn funding if:

- they are a parent under the age of 20 at the start of their course
- the main carer for their child
- living in England
- either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- the course is publicly-funded, the childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding. This includes courses that take place in schools, school sixth-forms, sixth-form colleges, other colleges and learning providers including Foundation Learning and children’s centres.

[Further information](#)

## **6. Local authority home to school or college travel support**

### **Students without an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years**

The overall intention of the sixth-form age travel duty is to ensure that:

- students of sixth-form age are able to access education and training of their choice
- If support to access education or training of their choice is requested, the need will be assessed and appropriate support will be provided where this is necessary

There is a presumption that in the majority of cases, young people will use the Transport for London offer to access their chosen school or college.

### **Local authority support for young people without an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years**

Travel awards for 16 to 19 year olds without SEND are designed to enable and/or support attendance at state maintained school and academy sixth-forms or further education colleges, and would be in the form of a grant.

Grants are payable in three termly instalments to eligible students, including those who express preference for travelling from home to school or college by bicycle, appropriate to the number of Greater London travel zones in their journeys, as follows:

- 1 zone of travel £200
- 2 zones of travel £250
- 3 zones of travel £350
- 4 zones of travel £470

If eligible students attend specialist courses (which are not available locally) at education or training providers at a considerable distance from their home and they consequently incur annual travel costs that exceed the maximum amount available, the authority will provide Learner Support Fund grants, subject to availability at the time of application, to cover the additional costs.

### **Eligibility criteria**

Grants are available for young people living in Richmond upon Thames based on the following eligibility criteria.

- Students must be aged 16 years or over and under 19 years at the start of the academic year in which the course begins.
- Students must be attending on a full-time basis at Richmond and Hillcroft Adult and Community College, Richmond upon Thames College or the further education college nearest to their home that offers their chosen course (allowance will be made for preference for a college that suits the needs of students with disabilities or learning difficulties and the needs of those of particular religions or denominations) or who are continuing at state-maintained religious or denominational school sixth forms.

- The distance from home to school or college, measured by the shortest route by road and publicly-maintained footpaths, is more than three miles, or they have disabilities and/or learning difficulties).
- The student, or their family, is receiving one of the following benefits: Income Support; Jobseeker's Allowance (Income-based); Universal Credit; and Child Tax Credit but are not also receiving Working Tax Credit and have an annual taxable income of less than £16,190, or Working Tax Credit, or financial support, in accordance with Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or the local authority's Asylum and Resettlement Team.
- The school or college attended by the student is not accessible within a timetabled journey of less than one hour by bus where the Transport for London free travel concession for under-19 year olds applies throughout the whole bus journey.

[Application form](#)

### **Assistance in exceptional circumstances**

The local authority has the discretion to provide financial assistance for travel to 16 to 19 year olds in education and training in exceptional circumstances. These may be social, medical, financial, or other circumstances, but which cause significant disadvantage to attendance at school or college and which fall outside the eligibility criteria of this policy. Circumstances that could fall within this category include:

- a sudden, significant change in financial circumstances
- living, or having been, in public care
- receiving assistance from the People with Learning Difficulties Service
- being supported by the Youth Offending Service
- relocation due to domestic violence or abuse
- a change of school or college following exclusion

This list is not exhaustive. Applicants who feel that they have any such circumstances should provide full details on their application form and provide any relevant documents that can support their case. Applications that outline exceptional circumstances will be considered on their own merits by a senior officer in the local authority and discretion may be given.

Successful applicants at this stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the senior officer. Applicants who are refused at this stage will be given the right of appeal to the Pupil and Student Support Appeals Panel.

## Right to appeal

Applicants who do not meet the policy criteria, and whose circumstances are not deemed to justify the awarding of discretionary support have the right to appeal against the local authority's refusal of assistance with home to school travel costs. Unsuccessful applicants will automatically be notified of the appeal procedure.

Appeals are heard on a quarterly basis by the local authority's pupil and student support appeals panel, which is made up of four elected councillors and one parent-governor representative. Appeals are treated on their own merits. Applicants who are successful at the appeal stage will be awarded grants at values to be determined by the appeals panel. Local authority travel support for students with an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years

## Students with an EHCP aged 16 to 19 years

For the purposes of this transport policy statement, 19 years refers to the end of the academic year in which the student turns 19 years of age, or the end of the academic year in which a student completes a course that he or she started before the age of 19 years.

The local authority has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport or travel support.

- The SEN Code of Practice states that 'providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life'. This means preparing young people, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives.
- The objective for the home to school travel service is to support children and young people with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible. This is because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, being able to enjoy time with their family and friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, and studying, training and gaining meaningful employment.

This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.

- It is recognised that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some children and young people with the most complex SEND needs. Where this is the case, the objective for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people's transport where this is desired and appropriate.
- This 16 to 19 transport policy statement applies to young people of sixth form age with SEND up to the age of 19 years (and beyond the age of 19 if the student is continuing on a particular course which he or she started before the age of 19 years).
- Students with SEND who have an EHCP may be eligible for support and this would be assessed using the eligibility criteria in this policy statement. Travel assistance for 16 to 19 year olds with SEND and with an EHCP is designed to enable and support attendance at educational and training placements named in the young person's EHCP.

- The statutory guidance from the Department for Education on post-16 transport and travel support to education and training settings (January 2019) states that the transport needs of young people with SEND must be reassessed when a young person moves from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, even if the young person is remaining at the same educational setting.

Arrangements cannot be limited to those young people who had been assessed as having particular transport needs prior to the age of 16. The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to publish a Local Offer setting out their services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and this must include information on the arrangements for travel to and from post-16 institutions.

### **Eligibility criteria for post-16 travel assistance and Year 11 reassessment**

For the academic year 2020/21, in line with statutory guidance, all young people in Year 11 (aged 15 to 16), moving from compulsory schooling to post-16 education, must reapply and be reassessed. The local authority will exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance for students aged 16 to 19 with SEND where it considers that travel assistance is necessary to enable the young person to reasonably access the education or training provision specified in their EHCP. As young people with SEND approach adulthood, where appropriate, transport assistance will be provided to support independence.

In assessing eligibility for students entering post-16 education and training for travel assistance, particular attention will be paid to the following criteria.

- Whether the student is currently in receipt of any funding from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and to what value.
- The location of the sixth form unit or college the student would like to attend. If this is not a local provision, the local authority would need to know that the course being taken is not available locally.
- Whether the sixth form unit is an extension to the school previously attended by the student and named in their EHCP.
- The distance from the student's home to their education or training establishment and the journey time.
- Whether the young person has SEND and/or mobility difficulties which would impede their access to their educational placement, either independently or otherwise, for example, a wheelchair user.
- Whether the young person has SEND which would make it unsafe for them to travel independently.
- Whether the public transport journey to the nearest suitable placement is too complex for the young person to be expected to travel independently.

Where the local authority agrees to provide travel assistance to a young person in post-16 education or training, the assistance will take one of the following forms.

- Reimbursement of train or tube travel costs, where students have received independent travel training and are able to use public transport to make solo journeys. Parents or carers would be asked to confirm that the young person is able to travel independently.
- Mileage reimbursement, where students are not able to travel independently, but where parents or carers are able to provide transport. If the family is in receipt of DLA or PIP with a mobility component or has a mobility car due to a young person's disability, this must be used for the young person's education transport.
- The allocation of a travel buddy equivalent to a passenger assistant to support independent travel.
- Training to travel independently by walking or using public transport.
- Training to cycle independently by reimbursement for a bicycle and safety equipment.
- An SEND travel bursary.
- The offer of funded driving lessons where the young person is the correct age and this is the most cost-efficient option. Students can drive a car when they are 16 if they have, or have applied for, the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- In exceptional circumstances, the provision of a local authority minibus service from home or from a collection point (whichever is assessed as most appropriate).
- In highly exceptional circumstances, the provision of a taxi or licensed private hire car from home or from a collection point (whichever is assessed as most appropriate)

### **Nearest suitable placement**

The nearest suitable school or college is one that the local authority deems to be suitable for the age, ability, aptitude and specific needs of the student. Young people may express a preference for any maintained school, or any form of academy or free school, or the further education college they wish to attend. However, if a young person expresses a preference to attend a school or college further away than the nearest suitable school or college, the local authority reserves the right to refuse transport assistance to that school or college.

### **The SEN bursary scheme**

The SEN travel bursary scheme is a discretionary offer to families, which can be put towards the cost of an alternative form of travel (such as a private taxi) where students are not able to travel independently and parents or carers are not able to provide transport. It is assessed on an individual basis. Some families have expressed concerns about the level of mileage reimbursement available where they would like to make their own transport arrangements but require upfront investment for this to be viable. A bursary is agreed on a case by case individual basis on request.

## Targeted independent travel training for young people with SEND

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities up to the age of 25 who are in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this duty by providing opportunities for young people to increase their skills and confidence and reduce their sense of reliance on family members. Independent travel training (ITT) has been effectively delivered for since 2014, with 92 young people successfully completing the training - an 87% success rate. In line with the local authority's aims and objectives to support independence and prepare young people for adulthood, and where appropriate employment, ITT will continue to be expanded as an option.

Where a young person is already eligible for the SEND home to school travel service, an ITT assessment will be carried out in the home, with the support of the family, to confirm the suitability of the candidate for the ITT programme. The assessment will take into account the following criteria.

- The young person's existing level of independent travel skills.
- The age of the student.
- The distance between home and the student's education or training provision.
- The special educational need or disability of the student.
- The route which the young person would need to undertake.
- Journey times using public transport and the complexity of the journey.
- The frequency of the journeys required.

This assessment takes place before the young person undertakes the ITT programme and lasts for approximately four weeks. During the programme, the young person will travel to and from their education or training provision each day with their dedicated one-to-one ITT trainer.

During the period when the young person is taking part in the ITT, this will be their designated transport assistance offer. At the end of the ITT programme, the local authority will review the young person's progress with their family to decide if it is appropriate for the young person to continue to travel independently. In some cases, it will not be appropriate for the young person to travel independently, in which case their previous transport offer will be reinstated.

It is acknowledged that in a minority of cases, due to the nature of the young person's special educational need or disability, ITT will not be appropriate. For this reason the local authority will use a targeted approach in consultation with parents, carers and the young person.

### Applying for post-16 travel assistance

Applications for post-16 SEND transport assistance should be made using the [online form](#).

## 7. Contributions towards the travel of young people with SEND aged 16 to 19 years

### Discretionary policy

Local authorities are expected to target support to those young people, and their families, who need it most, particularly those with a low income. The statutory guidance confirms that local authorities may ask students and their parents for a financial contribution to transport costs. In exercising their discretion local authorities should:

- ensure that any contribution is affordable for students and their parents
- ensure that there are arrangements in place to support those families on low income
- take into account the likely duration of learning and ensure that transport policies do not adversely impact particular groups, for example: as young people with SEND are more likely to remain in education or training for longer than their peers, any contribution sought from these families would need to allow for the fact they may have to contribute for a longer period.

### Spare seats on transport – spare seat policy

Where a young person has been assessed as not being eligible for free 16 to 19 travel assistance, parents may be given the option, where spaces are available on suitable existing SEND transport, for their child to access a space on that transport by paying a financial contribution towards the cost of the transport. This will apply to young people moving into Year 12 each September.

### Distance from home to school or college

The financial contribution will be dependent on the school or college's distance from the young person's home address.

Distance – single journey	Contribution – academic year
Less than 8 miles	£700
8 to 16 miles	£933
17 to 25 miles	£1,166
More than 25 miles	£1,400



For families on low incomes, in receipt of the maximum working tax credit, a reduced financial contribution will apply. This will be calculated based on all the circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

### **16-19 contribution refunds**

If a young person's contribution has been agreed and, for whatever reason, they do not complete that programme of study, any refund for transport will be applied at the end of the academic term in which they leave that provision. The same will apply if the young person is subject to an extended period of non-attendance due to ill health; however, day-to-day non-attendance would not be subject to a refund. A refund will only be agreed in the event that the young person leaves the provision or an extended period of non-attendance due to ill health.

## **8. Local authority travel support for students with an EHCP aged 19 to 25 years**

### **Students with an EHCP aged 19 to 25 years**

For the purposes of this transport policy statement, 19 years refers to the end of the academic year in which the student turns 19 years of age.

The local authority will provide travel assistance for people who meet the eligible criteria for support. Reference to 'adults' in this policy statement is a reference to both 'adults' and 'relevant young adults' as defined in Section 508F of the Education Act 1996.

This part of the transport policy statement deals with the provision of transport assistance for adults aged 19 to 25 years with an EHCP who live in Richmond upon Thames and are in education or training at a qualifying educational establishment at:

- a school (including an academy school)
- a further education institution (including a sixth-form college)
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education
- an establishment funded directly by the Education Funding Agency, such as an independent specialist provider for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- a learning provider that is funded by the local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes; this could include a college, charity or private learning provider

In relation to adults with an EHCP and receiving education or training at a qualifying educational establishment.

The local authority has the following aims and objectives when assessing transport or travel support.

- The SEN Code of Practice states that ‘providers should enable children and young people to have the information and skills they need to help them gain independence and prepare for adult life’. This means preparing young people and young adults, wherever possible, for independent living, employment and for being as healthy as possible in their adult lives.
- The objective for the local authority travel service is to support young people and young adults with SEND to work towards independent living wherever this is possible. This is because of the benefits that this brings in adulthood in terms of where they live, being able to enjoy time with their family and friends, taking part in social and leisure activities, and studying, training and gaining meaningful employment. This approach recognises that it is beneficial for independent travel skills to be developed from the earliest opportunity, so that young people and young adults are supported to build up their competence and confidence in their approach to adulthood.
- It is recognised that achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some young people and young adults with the most complex SEND needs. Where this is the case, the objective for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own young people’s transport where this is desired and appropriate.
- The post-19 travel assistance policy will have a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support. It moves away from an approach of blanket and standard provision in favour of a policy which recognises that young people and young adults are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

### **Eligibility criteria for post-19 travel assistance**

In accordance with Section 508F of the Education Act 1996 (and subsequent amendments) the local authority will make transport arrangements it considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of young people and young adults aged between 19 and 25 years with an EHCP, where the local authority had secured the provision of education or training. This applies to:

- adults (those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector
- Adults aged under 25 with an EHCP for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors. For those young adults, the local authority’s duty only applies where it has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training

The assessment of eligibility of an adult aged between 19 and 25 with an EHCP for transport assistance will consider the suitability and feasibility of different transport options and will take into account:

- The availability of existing transport
- The person's physical mobility
- The person's ability to travel independently
- Access to a Motability vehicle and whether it is reasonable to use it to travel to the relevant location
- Availability and willingness of family and carers to assist with transport
- Any factors that may pose an unreasonable demand or risk to health and safety when travelling

Where the local authority agrees to provide travel assistance to an adult aged between 19 and 25 years with an EHCP, the assistance will take one of the following forms.

- Reimbursement of train or tube travel costs, where students have received independent travel training and are able to use public transport to make solo journeys. The parents or carers would be asked to confirm that this person is able to travel independently.
- Mileage reimbursement, where students are not able to travel independently, but where the parents or carers are able to provide transport.
- The allocation of a travel buddy equivalent to a passenger assistant to support independent travel.
- Training to travel independently by walking or using public transport.
- Training to cycle independently by reimbursement for a bicycle and safety equipment.
- The offer of funded driving lessons where the young person is the correct age and this is the most cost-efficient option. Students can drive a car when they are 16 if they have, or have applied for, the enhanced rate of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP).
- In exceptional circumstances, the provision of a local authority minibus service from home or from a collection point (whichever is assessed as most appropriate).
- In highly exceptional circumstances, the provision of a taxi or licensed private hire car from home or from a collection point (whichever is assessed as most appropriate).

### **Applying for post-19 travel assistance**

Applications for post-19 SEND transport assistance should be made using the [online form](#).

When assessing eligibility, the applicant or their parent or carer must provide evidence why it is necessary for the local authority and not the student to make travel arrangements. To assess this, it is necessary for the local authority to know the following.

- What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable.
- If there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student and if not, why they would be unable to do so.
- When assessing an adult's need for travel assistance under the Care Act, the local authority will take into consideration DLA or PIP benefits where people receive the mobility component, a vehicle provided by the Motability Scheme and bus pass or other form of travel concessions. It is reasonable for the local authority to consider that by having these benefits a person's needs are in some way already being met. Vehicles provided by the Motability Scheme are done so in order for people receiving support to maintain their independence, including when this vehicle is being driven by a nominated driver, such as a family member.
- Motability vehicles are provided on the understanding that the car is used by, or for the benefit of, the disabled person. Motability vehicles can be insured by up to three people who can help support the person by driving for them. Not giving the person the benefit of the car because it is being used by someone else, is considered misuse by the Motability Scheme and can put the lease at risk. It is clear that a vehicle from the Motability Scheme is to be used for the benefit of the person for whom it is provided. Where a nominated driver is willing and able to use the car to take an eligible young person to an educational setting, the local authority may offer a mileage allowance in the form of a direct payment.
- Any other circumstances that should be taken into account; the local authority will consider any recent supporting evidence that is provided.

A post-19 student's work or childcare commitments would not normally be considered as a reason for travel assistance to be provided.

Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the law, local authority policy and any supporting information provided.

## **9. Apprenticeships**

If an apprenticeship is named in a young person's EHCP, transport arrangements to support young people with an EHCP to travel independently to their place of employment will be considered. These may include the costs of travelling to or from the work placement, based on an assessment of the young person's access to other sources of support such as the Apprenticeship Travelcard or the 16 to 19 Bursary. Eligibility will be considered on the same basis as a student attending a school or college placement.

## **10. Short-term difficulties**

### **Students receiving bus transport provision**

Where a young person receives home to school transport from a minibus and cannot get to and from a collection point (for example, due to a broken leg or other short-term illness) temporary assistance may be offered as replacement for this service. Although the student's SEND has not changed, temporary physical or medical constraints make it difficult for the child to access the service.

### **Parents with authorised mileage allowances**

Temporary assistance may be provided in those instances where a parent or carer in receipt of an authorised mileage allowance cannot transport their child to and from school due to a short-term illness. Alternative arrangements may take up to 10 working days to be put in place.

### **Students who have temporarily changed address**

Transport assistance may not be provided where a student who usually receives assistance moves to a different address in the short-term, if the changed address results in additional transport costs. The parent or carer will be expected to pay any additional costs associated with the short term move, or make their own transport arrangements.

### **Re-housed students**

If a family has moved to an address within a different local authority area, the responsibility for the young person's EHCP and travel assistance to their education or training placement transfers to the local authority area in which they are residing. This is because the family has become ordinarily resident in the new area.

This is the case regardless of which local authority is paying the family's housing costs and regardless of whether the family intend to move back to the Richmond borough in the future.

## **11. Dual or link placements and inclusion**

Dual or link placements are where a student attends more than one education or training provider. Dual placements may require additional transport assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times, or during the school or college day. The local authority has a duty to provide travel assistance to the school or college named in the young person's EHCP, but only with respect to journeys at the beginning and end of each school day.

The school or college named in the young person's EHCP is responsible for arranging and paying for any transport required to dual placements. Where a young person is on roll at one school or college but visits another school or college for inclusion or link purposes, the school or college where the student is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport.

## **12. Residential education and training providers**

### **Transport for students attending a weekly residential placement**

Students attending a weekly residential placement funded by the local authority (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with weekly transport. This will usually consist of one journey at the beginning of the week on a Monday morning and one journey at the end of the week on a Friday afternoon.

### **Transport for students attending a 38-week residential placement**

Students attending termly residential school or college placements funded by the local authority for a standard 38-week academic year (and who are eligible for transport assistance) will be provided with transport assistance between home and school or college at the start and end of each term period (usually half-termly). This equates to 12 single journeys during the academic year (four journeys per term).

### **Maximum transport assistance for residential placements and variations**

Transport assistance for any student attending termly residential school or college placements will not exceed 12 single journeys. If the school or college is closed on a weekly or fortnightly basis, this must be reflected in the fees paid by the local authority for the placement and transport will be provided to coincide with school closures.

### **Transport for students attending a 52-week residential placement**

It is unusual for young people to be provided with transport to support their attendance at a 52-week residential placement; however, some transport assistance may be provided by the local authority to support parental contact. Any such transport would be agreed on an individual basis and would be based on a financial assessment.

### **Visits to students attending residential placements**

Transport assistance will not be provided to parents, carers or family members who wish to visit residential education and training providers for any reason. Any arrangements of this nature must be agreed directly with the school. In exceptional cases, parents or carers may be provided with transport assistance to a school or college once per year to attend their child's annual review. Any such transport would be agreed on an individual basis and would be based on a financial assessment.

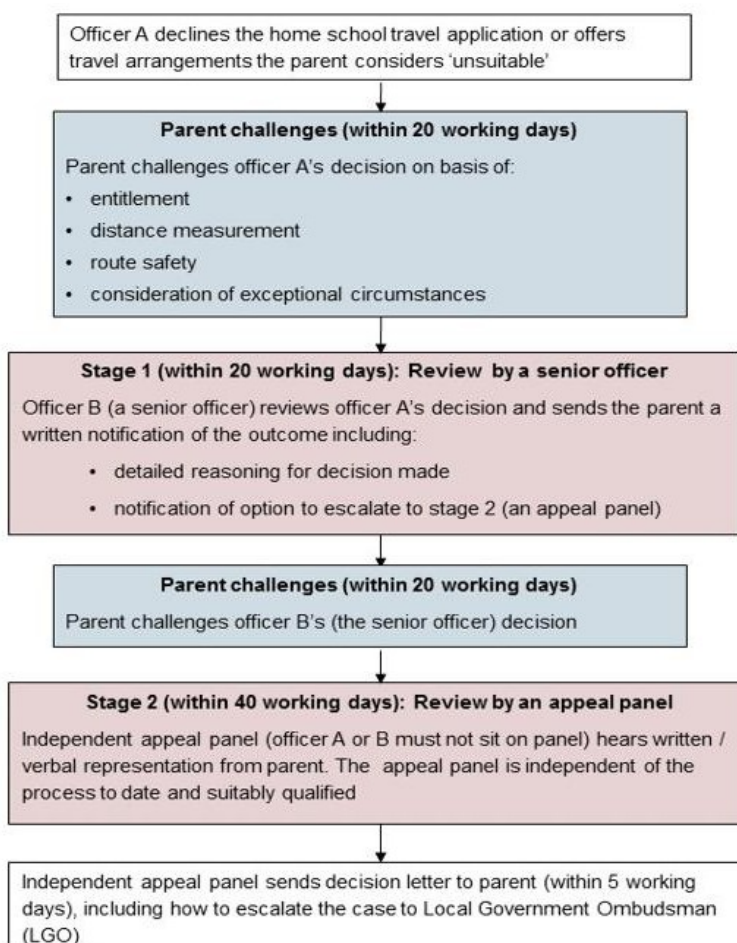
Young people whose parents or carers wish to accompany them on the first day at school or college will be expected to make their own transport arrangements. Where a school or college stipulates that a parent or carer should attend on the first day, private transport must be arranged.

## 13. Appeals

If a request for travel assistance is declined, the young person and their parents or carers will be advised in writing of the decision and given details of how and when they may appeal.

During an appeal about an initial application for travel assistance, transport will not be provided to the young person. Where the appeal concerns a change to transport arrangements for a young person who has previously been assessed as eligible, then the previously agreed transport arrangements will continue during the appeal period.

The appeal process is outlined in the flow chart below:



In line with national guidance, the independent appeals panel referred to in the flowchart is made up of a group of elected councillors who will be assembled once a Stage 2 appeal has been submitted.

## **14. Education, health and care plans**

### **Recording travel assistance in EHCPs**

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that travel assistance should be recorded in an EHCP only in exceptional cases and where the child or young person has particular transport needs.

### **Annual reviews and travel assistance**

The local authority's guidance to education and training providers states that they should carefully review each student's individual transport needs at least once a year and advises that this could be completed as part of the annual review for students with EHCPs. Based on the outcome of reviews, the local authority will make any changes necessary to transport arrangements or travel assistance which are the result of a young person's changing needs. For example, a young person may no longer require a passenger assistant or may be ready to start independent travel training.

Any interim changes in circumstances may also result in a change in eligibility for transport assistance. For example, the family may have moved home to be closer to the young person's education or training provider. Once a student has been assessed as being eligible for transport assistance, it does not guarantee they will continue to be eligible in the future. The provision of transport assistance will also be reviewed to reflect any changes in government policy or legislation.

## **15. Transport management**

### **Timeframes for arranging travel assistance**

Where the local authority agrees to provide transport by minibus or taxi, it will ordinarily take up to 12 working days to arrange the transport, but may be faster when a young person is being added to an existing route which has space. In some cases, arrangements may take longer, such as where there is a need for a specialist vehicle or where a specialist health carer or nurse may be required to support a young person's health needs on transport. This time period allows the SEND Transport Service sufficient time to assess each student's needs, obtain quotes for the transport provider, and ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place.

### **Confirming travel arrangements**

Young people and/or their parents and carers will be informed of the transport arrangements in writing in advance of travel. They will be provided with a link to the 'Getting to School' booklet which sets out the arrangements and duties of the local authority and the transport provider, alongside the responsibilities of parents and carers.

Young people and/or their parents and carers will be asked to confirm agreement to the arrangements by signing and returning a letter of agreement. Transport will not commence until the signed letter of agreement is received.



## Availability of transport

The availability of transport is not guaranteed. A case may arise where a young person is non-ambulant, but has not been allocated a crash-tested buggy or wheelchair for use on transport. Transport crews are not permitted to lift young people onto or off transport. Parents, carers and education and training providers are also not permitted to lift young people onto or off transport as a situation may arise (such as a mechanical fault to the vehicle) which may require the transport crews to lift the young person during a journey. In these circumstances, parental mileage reimbursement may be given as an alternative.

## Individual travel arrangements

Individual transport will not be provided. Young people must expect to travel to and from their education provider with other students and young people, unless there are exceptional circumstances where it would not be reasonable to expect a young person to do so.

# 16. Passenger assistants

## Criteria for having a passenger assistant

Passenger assistants will be provided on some transport routes. The provision or non-provision of a passenger assistant on a route is based on several factors, including:

- the age of the student
- the distance between home and the young person's education or training provision
- information provided on the transport assessment form
- the special educational need or disabilities of the student
- the number of other students travelling on this route

There is no minimum or maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant will be automatically provided and the local authority will consider age in conjunction with the factors listed in the above paragraph to make its decision.

## Transport providers – nominated controllers

Transport is co-ordinated and managed by the SEND transport service in Achieving for Children on behalf of the local authority. Each transport provider will also have a nominated controller who is the first point of contact for education and training providers, parents and carers, and who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the service.

## Use of CCTV on transport

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) with audio recording or global positioning systems (GPS) may be used on some vehicles. The CCTV footage will not be shared or circulated with anyone outside the local authority or Achieving for Children. CCTV footage is managed in line with Achieving for Children's information governance framework which complies with the General Data Protection Regulations. Along with GPS, CCTV can help to improve the speed and accuracy of incident resolution, and also supports transport crew training.

## 18. Pick-up and drop-off arrangements

### Pick-up points

Transport providers are authorised to make pick-ups and drop-offs at authorised pick-up points only. The authorised pick-up points will usually be those specified on the EHCP, normally the student's home and education provider address, or an allocated bus stop or collection point. Parents and carers should provide one alternative address, wherever possible, which must be within one mile of the usual home address, to be used in the event that the parent or carer is unable to meet the student.

Any changes to these addresses, whether permanent or temporary, must be communicated in writing to the SEND transport service. Until written confirmation is received, the only other authorised place for drop-off will be the nearest children and family services centre. The location of this centre will be communicated to parents and carers at the start of each transport arrangement. A change of address will be regarded as a change in circumstances, which may affect a young person's eligibility for transport assistance.

### Collection points

Collection points are similar to bus stops, where we identify designated pick-up and drop-off locations for the student to meet the bus or taxi rather than offering a door to door service. This reduces the time needed for the route to pick up the pupils and students, allows the SEND transport service to allocate more passengers to each route, and supports young people to become more independent and better prepares them for adulthood.

Collection points may be introduced on some routes, where the pupils and students are able to walk, to improve the efficiency of the route and reduce the time needed for the route to collect the students. Where the introduction of collection points is being considered, Achieving for Children will formally carry out a 28 day consultation with the parents and carers already on those routes affected by this potential change in service. Achieving this level of independence will not be possible for some young people with the most complex SEND needs.

Where this is the case, the ambition for the service is to improve the range of options available for families to take responsibility for their own children's transport where this is desired and appropriate. In some cases, parents' own mobility or disability may impact them being able to accompany their young person to a collection point. In such circumstances, the individual needs of the young person will be carefully considered and assessed, together with the mobility and or disability of their parents.

Where a collection point is allocated, it is the parent's or carer's responsibility to make sure that their child travels to and from the collection point and transfers to and from the vehicle safely. No temporary assistance will be provided in those circumstances where a parent or carer is unable to take their child to and from a collection point for onward transport to their education provider by a private bus company. This is because the young person's special educational need or disability has not changed and the transport service from the collection point is still available.

All collection points will be within a one mile walking distance of the student's home address, and will be assessed in advanced for their suitability.

- Wherever a bus stop can be legally used as a collection point, it will be.
- Minibuses can stop to collect and drop off on yellow and double yellow lines; vehicles cannot stop on red routes, white zig zags (near a zebra crossing) or school keep-clear hatchings.
- Transport should be planned so not to cause obstructions to other road users whilst making a drop-off or collection and should try to stop in parking areas or bays.
- Collections or drop-offs should are always made kerb side.
- Each collection point is physically assessed prior to being used in service, a driver will go out and test to see if the location is safe, for example: a well-lit public location, not too close to a junction or on the brow of a hill etc.
- The driver's complete dynamic risk assessments at the time of collections or drop-offs in the eventuality of any changes, such as new road layouts, another road user in the stopping space, may lead to a slight adjustment to the collectionpoint if it is unsafe to stop in the planned collection point.

### **Timing of pick-up and drop-off**

The timings for pick-up and drop-off will be specified by the appropriate transport provider's controller. Students and their parents or carers must ensure they are aware of the correct times. Times may change if new young people join a route, or if young people leave a route.

### **Responsibility for accompanying the student to and from the vehicle**

Where a student is picked up or dropped-off at home, the parent or carer is responsible for accompanying the young person to and from their door to the vehicle. The parent or carer should keep a lookout for the vehicle's arrival since the vehicle will not sound its horn. It is against the law to sound a horn from a stationary vehicle. In exceptional circumstances, such as where the young person travels alone in a taxi with a passenger assistant, the driver or passenger assistant may call at the door or telephone ahead, although this is at the discretion of the transport crew.

In order to minimise journey times for every young person on the transport, students are required to be available within three minutes of the specified time of pick-up, and parents or carers are required to be available within three minutes of the specified time of drop-off. If the young person, parent or carer is not available within that time, the transport provider will attempt to make telephone contact with the parent or carer to find out if there is a particular difficulty on that morning or afternoon.

If the controller is unable to make direct contact with the parent or carer, the driver is instructed to leave that pickup or drop-off point and move onto the next point. Should the transport move on without the young person in the morning, transport to school or college will then become the responsibility of the parent or carer for that individual journey. If the parent or carer is unavailable to receive the student in the afternoon, the young person will be transported to the nearest place of safety. Transport assistance will be reviewed and may

be removed if there are ongoing delays.

In some exceptional cases, to recognise the needs of an individual young person, the three-minute waiting time may be marginally adjusted and the transported provider informed; however, this cannot impact on the arrival times of other students on shared transport.

### **Variations to normal procedure**

Any requests for a variation to the usual procedure must be agreed with the controller. Parents and carers must not agree changes directly with the crew, as this can lead to safeguarding concerns, but they must ensure that there are no delays in making young people available for the journey (or collecting them in the evenings) as this is one of the main factors affecting total journey time. This can have a detrimental effect on how other passengers manage the remainder of their journey.

### **Stopping outside a student's home**

In some cases, it may not be legal or safe or there may not be adequate parking facilities for the transport to stop directly outside a young person's home. In these cases, parents and carers are required to walk with the young person to the safest nominated point for the student to be collected. This collection point will be specified by the transport provider.

## **19. Reporting absence**

Where a young person cannot attend their education provision on any particular day (for example, due to illness), parent's or carer's are expected to contact the transport company immediately. For long-term absences, parents or carers should contact the SEND transport service.

Parents and carers should contact their respective transport company the night before travel if they know then that the young person will be unwell on the following day.

Alternatively, they should contact the transport provider as early as possible on the morning of travel if the young person only shows signs of being unwell on the day they are due to travel.

All transport which is not cancelled in advance of the vehicle arriving at the home address must be paid for by the local authority, whether or not the young person boards the vehicle. Where a young person suddenly refuses to travel in transport which has arrived on any given day (without any prior notice having been given to the transport company), the young person's transport provision will be reviewed.

Where parents or carers repeatedly fail to cancel transport provision for the young person before it arrives at the home address, or where it can be established that public funds are being used inappropriately, as a result of vehicles not being cancelled with sufficient prior warning, young people may be excluded from transport for a period of time. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting their own children during any period of exclusion from transport.

## **20. Parents and carers not at home**

In the event that a parent or carer is unable to meet the young person at the specified drop-off point at the specified time, transport providers are instructed to take young people to the nearest place of safety. Social care services may be notified and/or transport assistance withdrawn if this happens frequently. Parents, carers or education providers should contact the controller or SEND transport service if there are any emergency changes. The controller has a duty to advise parents, carers and education providers if there are going to be any foreseen delays to the delivery of the service.

## **21. Parents and carers with other commitments**

It is not possible to take into account family circumstances when allocating pick-up and drop-off times for students. Timings are based on the most efficient route available. The efficient planning of routes is a priority, especially as it is important to minimise the time that pupils and students need to spend on transport on every route. The local authority is unable to consider requests for specific pick-up times from parents or carers because this may lead to inequality for other young people, since a vehicle cannot collect two young people from different addresses at the same time. In addition, requests for pick-up times would also compromise route efficiencies, making them longer for all the other students using the transport.

Transport assistance is awarded to pupils and students with SEND because of their needs and should not be considered as an extension to childcare or a service which facilitates parents or carers working or looking after other children who are not yet of school age.

## **22. Severe weather**

In cases of severe weather, where parents and carers are advised that transport has been cancelled for the morning journey, they should assume that transport will also be cancelled for the afternoon journey, unless they are advised otherwise. If parents or carers decide to take the young person to school or college despite the severe weather, they will also need to arrange to collect the young person after school or college.

## **23. Safety assessments**

Where the local authority agrees to provide either minibus transport or taxi transport for a young person, it may be necessary to complete a safety assessment of the young person's physical and medical needs. Until this safety assessment is completed, transport between home and the young person's education provision will be the responsibility of the parents or carers.

Some young people with SEND have physical and medical conditions which deteriorate over time. If, at any point, it is felt by the SEND transport service that a further risk assessment maybe necessary to ensure that a young person's physical and medical needs are being met on board transport, this risk assessment will be planned and completed.

Until the recommendations from this updated risk assessment are complete, it will be the responsibility of the parents and carers to transport the young person between home and school.

## **24. Medication**

Although there is no statutory duty for transport staff to administer medication, they are expected to ensure the health and safety of all students in their care. All members of transport staff have received accredited emergency first-aid training.

First-aid training includes managing the symptoms of shock dealing with an unconscious casualty, cardiac arrest and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, choking, managing seizures (but not administering medication), and the use of an Epi-pen™.

The emergency services can advise members of transport staff about the closest automated external defibrillator for use in treating a patient in cardiac arrest.

The local authority will ensure that every driver and passenger assistant is able to respond to an emergency situation, however, they will not normally be expected to administer medical assistance. Every young person or parent or carer, as part of their application, is required to provide detailed information directly to the SEND transport service about the young person's SEND and medical needs. This information forms the basis of the young person's transport plan. In some cases, where a young person has very specific and complex needs, an additional care plan from medical professionals may be required.

Members of transport staff are not permitted to carry or administer medication or to replace medical accessories (for example, gastrostomy or tracheotomy tubes) on board a vehicle. The exception to this are pre-loaded Epi-pens™ or pre-loaded buccal midazolam devices as these devices are loaded with the correct dosage of medication and do not require members of transport staff to accurately measure medication within a confined and possibly moving space.

In the event of an emergency on board a vehicle, the procedure is for the passenger assistant or driver to seek guidance from medical professionals by calling 999 and asking for a paramedic crew to attend the scene. It is for parents or carers to decide whether they wish for their child to travel on regular transport in these circumstances.

Where it is assessed to be unsafe for a young person with complex or acute medical needs to travel with only a passenger assistant, the local authority will seek to secure a medically-trained professional, such as a nurse or carer, to accompany the young person on the vehicle. A risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure the correct level of medical support can be arranged.

## 25. Behaviour standards

### Instances of unacceptable difficulties

Any young person may experience behavioural difficulties; however, on transport, unacceptable behaviour may affect the concentration of the driver and the overall safety of the other young people or passenger assistants. The local authority will work with education and training providers, parents, carers and transport providers to manage instances where a young person exhibits extreme behaviour characteristics, and in some cases alternative arrangements will need to be made.

In consultation with the young person's education provider, it may be necessary to introduce additional safety equipment within the vehicle or issue periods of fixed or permanent exclusion from transport. Parents and carers will be responsible for transporting the young person during any period of exclusion from transport.

### Allegations of unacceptable behaviour

Where an allegation of unacceptable behaviour is received, either from a parent, carer, school, college or transport provider, the young person against whom the allegation has been made may be temporarily excluded from transport services whilst an investigation is completed. Written statements will be requested from the driver and any passenger assistant, the school or college. The SEND panel and other parents or carers may also be consulted. Depending on the special educational needs or disabilities of the young person, the circumstances of the behavioural problem and consultation with the school or college and other parties, the procedure will be as follows.

Level	Incident	Outcome
1	First incident	First written warning
2	Second incident	Final written warning
3	Third incident	Permanent exclusion from transport services
	Physical abuse (at any stage)	Instant exclusion from transport services pending investigation, including written statements

## Responsibilities of students

When using transport, young people **must**:

- remain in their seats at all times
- wear their seat belts at all times
- follow and abide by the passenger assistant's and/or driver's instructions

When using transport, young people **must not**:

- abscond from the vehicle
- take photographs or video footage of any passenger (including the driver and passenger assistant)
- speak in an offensive or abusive manner to the transport crew, other passengers, or any other member of the public whilst in or around the vehicle
- behave in a way which may create a danger to themselves or other passengers, or in a way which could cause damage or disrespect to the vehicle
- exhibit behaviour of a sexual nature
- spit or fight
- smoke
- eat or drink (except in some circumstances where water may be allowed)

## 26. Providing a quality service

### Transport standards

Transport provision will be in accordance with contractual standards and legislation.

It is recognised that the quality of transportation to and from the education provider can often affect the emotional welfare and behavioural pattern of a young person. All drivers, passenger assistants and other crew members are expected to show understanding of, and empathy with, students, their parents, carers and school or college staff. They are expected to treat all children and young people with respect and in a dignified manner appropriate to their age.

All drivers and passenger assistants will greet passengers, parents and carers politely and ensure that all passengers travel in comfort and safety.

All drivers and passenger assistants will have undergone a training programme and will be in receipt of an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, in line with the local authority's commitment to safeguarding children and young people. Transport crews comprising a husband and wife (or civil partner) are permitted; however, families will be informed of this prior to the allocation of the route.



The competency of the driver and crew, the conduct of the vehicle during the journey and at the pick-up points will all be of a contractually prescribed standard.

The vehicles will be properly licensed and roadworthy. All vehicles with nine passenger seats or more will be inspected every six to 13 weeks. The frequency of inspection is set independently by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and is not set by the transport companies themselves. All taxi vehicles with eight passenger seats or less are licensed by the Public Carriage Office (PCO) and are subject to two MOT inspections per year.

All vehicles will offer standards of comfort and safety as prescribed by relevant legislation. Regular audit checks will be carried out on all vehicles. Vehicles will have modifications to allow for wheelchair access where appropriate.

The vehicle must be at its prescribed point of pick-up within five minutes of its allotted time, although traffic conditions and delays at the pick-up points for other passengers may affect these timings. Any major delays will be communicated, either via the relevant controller or the SEND transport service, to the school, parents or carers.

### Continuity

Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a student; however, this will not always be possible and changes may need to be made to ensure the most efficient use of available resources.

Wherever possible, parents, carers and education and training providers will be informed by the transport company about any changes to the crew member(s) in advance. Parents and carers are advised to take the name of the new driver and/or passenger assistant, and ask to see their identification, or contact the transport provider to verify identity if they are in any doubt.

Local authorities have a duty to spend public funds in the most appropriate and cost-effective manner. Routes will be reviewed regularly. Separate routes, taking young people to several different education and training providers, may be brought together into a single route where this is appropriate. Longer routes will be reviewed periodically with the respective education and training providers to ensure that concentration and attentiveness are not compromised by any change to passengers' journeys.

### Safeguarding

The local authority is committed to ensuring that children and young people on transport travel safely to school or college and arrive ready to learn.

The following safeguarding systems are in place to protect children's and young person's safety and promote their wellbeing.

- There are fixed and pre-vetted crews on all routes.
- Crew members have valid DBS certificates and appropriate licences.

- Crew members have completed safeguarding training.
- Crew members are provided with certified first-aid training.
- Child-seating is provided for children or young people below 135cm in height.
- Non-ambulant buggy or wheelchair users undergo a wheelchair risk assessment to verify that their buggy or wheelchair has been crash-tested for use on transport and to ensure that the correct safety equipment is used to secure the buggy or wheelchair in place.
- All confidential information is sent by secure email.
- All incidents on board transport are logged and investigated.
- Safeguarding concerns or allegations about a transport crew member are referred to the local authority designated officer (LADO).
- Crew members are provided with a procedure in circumstances where parents or carers are not available at their home address at the end of the school day, or have requested an agreed alternative destination.
- Taxi crews and vehicles are audited on a regular basis and checked for compliance against the service specification, including compliance with safeguarding procedures.
- Taxi providers are audited once per academic year and further strategic level checks are completed within these audits.

### Local authority designated officer (LADO)

Every local authority has a statutory responsibility to have a designated officer who is responsible for co-ordinating the response to concerns that an adult who works with children may have caused them harm. The role of the LADO is to manage and oversee any concerns or allegations about an individual who works with children and young people either in a paid or voluntary capacity. In the first instance, parents should make contact with the SEND transport service about their concerns. Concerns should be referred to the LADO by telephoning 020 8547 5008 or emailing: [lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:lado@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

## 27. Comments, compliments and complaints

The local authority is constantly looking at ways to improve the SEND transport service and welcomes comments from parents, carers, young people and school staff on any issue relating to the service. Comments or concerns about operational issues should be addressed to the relevant bus or taxi provider in the first instance. In the event that the provider cannot resolve the concern, the issue should be escalated to the SEND transport service for resolution.

Formal complaints will be managed in line with the local authority complaints procedures which are available [online](#)

## **28. Equalities statement**

The local authority is committed to delivering a high-quality service to everyone regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation and economic status. It will achieve this by delivering a service that meets individuals' needs and choices in a sensitive, meaningful and practical way. Where necessary and identified to the SEND transport service, a service user's cultural, religious or any other specific needs will be considered and appropriate action will be undertaken in the delivery of the service.

The local authority is committed to ensuring that our services are delivered in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. Data is collected from our service users and analysed in order to identify any negative impact on specific groups or communities, including families entitled to the service due to their economic status. Nothing within this policy, or any omission from it, should be interpreted as relieving the local authority from its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 or any other statutory requirements.